Social Studies
K-12 Enduring Understandings and Essential Questions
October 2007

Content	
Enduring Understandings	**Essential Questions**
Students will understand that:	
Government	
• People develop systems to manage conflict and create order. • Conflict resolution can involve aggression, compromise, cooperation, and change.	• What is power? • How is power gained, used, and justified? • How do competing interests influence how power is distributed and exercised? • How are governments created, structured maintained, and changed? • What happens in the absence of government? • Why do we have rules & laws; and what would happen if we didn't?
• Democratic societies must balance the rights and responsibilities of individuals with the common good.	• What are the roles and responsibilities of citizens and government in a democratic society? • What effect does a democratic government have on society?
Economics	
• Decisions concerning the allocation and use of economic resources impact individuals and groups.	• Why do we have money? • What does it mean to make a living? • How does something acquire a value? • What effect does the economy have on society? • How do economic systems affect your life and the lives of others? • How are economic resources distributed? • What impact does scarcity have on the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services?
• Local, national, and international relationships are affected by economic transactions.	• How does trade affect local, national, & international relationships? • What impact does trade have on a society?
Geography	
• Geography influences needs, culture, opportunities, choices, interests, and skills.	• How does geography influence lifestyle and point of view? • How do geography, climate, and natural resources affect the way people live and work? • What story do maps and globes tell? • What makes places unique and different? • How do maps and globes reflect history, politics, and economics?
• There is a relationship between the consumption and conservation of natural resources.	• What effect do people have on their environment?

Content	
Enduring Understandings	**Essential Questions**
Students will understand that:	
Culture & Sociology	
• Culture is a way of life of a group of people who share similar beliefs and customs.	• What is culture? • What can we learn about a culture through its art forms?
• Global societies are diverse, creating varied perspectives, contributions, and challenges.	• What are the benefits and challenges of *a* diverse society? • Why should we study other cultures and what does it teach us?
• People are affected by environmental, economic, social, cultural, and civic concerns.	• How do the beliefs and values of a diverse culture affect individuals and society?
• Culture is both a unifying and divisive force in human relations.	• What happens when cultures collide? • Why do people live together and form societies?
History	
• The study of the continuum of human civilization reveals the ideals, beliefs, values, and institutions of its people.	• What does it mean to be civilized? • Are modern civilizations more "civilized" than ancient ones? • What are the significant symbols and icons of civilizations/cultures?
• The study of political, social and economic patterns reveals continuity and change over time.	• What causes change over time?
• Knowledge of the past helps one understand the present and make decisions about the future.	• How does the evaluation of past events help us to make future decisions? • How can we know if we weren't there? • How am I connected to those in the past?
• People respond to and resolve conflicts in a variety of ways.	• Can an individual make a difference in history? • Why do people fight? • Is conflict inevitable? desirable? avoidable? • What is worth fighting for? • What is revolution?
• History involves interpretation; historians can and do disagree.	• How has the interpretation of history changed? • What should we do when primary sources disagree? • Whom do we believe & why?
Technology & Progress	
• Scientific and technological developments affect people's lives, the environment and transform societies.	• Is new technology always better than that which it will replace? • How do new technologies result in broader social change?
• Progress is defined by cultural interpretation.	• How does who you are help determine your perception of progress? • How do the various levels of technological development affect different cultures?

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Skills	
Enduring Understandings	**Essential Questions**
Students will understand that:	
Acquiring Information	
• Analytical questioning creates a purpose for research.	• Why do I research?
• Information can be acquired from various sources.	• What do I do when my immediate resources are not adequate? • What are the benefits of using multiple media to locate information? • How do I know which resources fit my needs?
• The research process requires the use of a variety of resources to ensure validity.	• How do I know my information is reliable (accurate, unbiased, current, and appropriate)?
• Interpreting and analyzing research results will answer a variety of questions.	• How does explaining my process help me to strengthen my research skills? • How do I know when I have enough information to answer my question thoroughly?
Organizing Information	
• Organization is critical to the acquisition, application, and evaluation of information.	• What organizational strategy best suits this research? • How does organizing the results of my research help me to use it?
• The data being presented determines the organizational format.	• How does the organization of information impact the effectiveness of its communication?
Analyzing, Interpreting & Applying Information	
• Effective communication relies on the purposeful use of information in a format appropriate to the task and the audience.	• How do I determine the appropriate presentation format for my task and audience?
• Critical examination and evaluation of data is essential to making informed decisions.	• How does new information influence how I think and act?
• Various types of materials enhance understanding.	• How does one analyze, evaluate & utilize various types of materials?
Developing Social & Political Participation	
• Examining social and civic issues helps to expand one's understanding of the world, its people, and themselves.	• What are the consequences if I do not accept my personal responsibilities to my community? • How do my actions impact others in my community? • How can I impact social change?

Skills	
Enduring Understandings	**Essential Questions**
Students will understand that:	
Developing Personal & Group Interaction	
• Collaboration is necessary in order to be an effective learner and citizen.	• Why do individuals choose to work together? • What role does conflict play in collaboration? • How do my personal decisions and actions affect others?
• Recognizing a diversity of viewpoints benefits all.	• How does the consideration of different viewpoints influence how one thinks and acts?
Reading	
• Text and organizational tools communicate different kinds of information. • Authors write for different purposes.	• What is the purpose of using both primary and secondary sources? • How does reading fiction help to acquire factual information?
• Readers use strategies to construct meaning.	• What impact do reading strategies have? • Why do we need to evaluate what we read?
• Language reflects historical changes and cultural differences.	• How does time and place in history influence language?
Writing	
• Writing is a process. • The writing process is consistent across disciplines.	• How does each step in the process impact your writing?
• Writers have a purpose for writing.	• How does the audience influence the format of your writing? • How is your style of writing influenced by your purpose?
• The use of proper formats results in effective communication.	• What am I trying to achieve through my writing?
• Writing is a tool used for thinking, learning and communicating.	• How can we use evaluation and reflection to improve our writing?
Technology	
• Technology is a tool that can be used for collecting, organizing, creating, and presenting information.	• What is the impact of technology on research and communication? • What are the benefits and limitations of using technology?